

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 EUR-12 AID-05 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 PC-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04

SIL-01 TRSE-00 /092 W

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R 221222Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4842

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 454

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LT, SF

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN'S RESPONSE TO VORSTER'S REMARKS
IN PARLIAMENT

REF: CAPE TOWN 448

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: PM JONATHAN RESPONDED TO PM VORSTER'S
ATTACK ON LESOTHO (PARA 4 REFTTEL), WHICH HE INTERPRETED AS A
CALL FOR PEOPLE OF LESOTHO TO TURN AGAINST GOL LEADERSHIP, AT
PUBLIC MEETING IN REMOTE BUTHA BUTHE APRIL 19. JONAHTAN SAID
VORSTER'S REMARKS WERE SERIOUS INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS
AND CONTRARY TO ASSURANCES AGAINST SUCH INTERFERENCE GIVEN BY
S.A. AT UN LAST YEAR. SAID PEOPLE OF LESOTHO FULLY SUPPORT
POSITION ON DETENTE TAKEN BY GOL AT OAU MEETING IN DAR ES SALAAM.
IT NOT TRUE THAT LESOTHO IS AGAINST DIALOGUE, AS PROVED BY HIS
OWN INITIATIVES IN MEETING LATE DR. VERWOERD AND VORSTER.
NEVERTHELESS, IF LESOTHO HAD BEEN INVITED TO JOIN IN CURRENT
DETENTE MOVES, SHE WOULD NOT HAVE ACCEPTED BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD
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BE CONTRARY TO OAU RESOLUTIONS, LUSAKA MANIFESTO, AND WISHES OF

BASOTHO PEOPLE. LESOTHO WANTS GOOD RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DETERIORATION IN THESE RELATIONS. RATHER, RELATIONS ARE STRAINED BY SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. (COPY OF JONATHAN SPEECH BEING POUCHED DEPT FOR AF/S.)

2. EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED COPY OF SPEECH DELIVERED BY FOREIGN MINISTER KOTSOKOANE AT OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN DAR WHICH PRESUMABLY PROVOKED VORSTER'S COMMENTS IN PARLIAMENT. KOTSO-KOANE REITERATED THAT THERE WAS NO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA, THAT VORSTER WAS EXPLOITING CONTACTS WITH AFRICAN STATES FOR HIS OWN ADVANTAGE TO GAIN TIME TO CONSOLIDATE APARTHEID. HE WENT ON TO CALL FOR UNEQUIVOCAL OPPOSITION TO APARTHEID AND EMPHASIZED THAT CONTACTS INTENDED TO CATALYZE POLITICAL CHANGE SHOULD BE MADE IN CONSULTATION WITH OAU-RECOGNIZED LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. (THIS SPEECH ALSO BEING POUCHED.)

3. MEANWHILE, VORSTER-JONATHAN CONTRETEMPS HAS BEEN TAKEN UP IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS. IN HARSH EDITORIAL APRIL 21, "BLOEMFONTEIN FRIEND", ONE OF MORE WIDELY READ SOUTH AFRICAN PAPERS IN LESOTHO, SAID VORSTER HAD CALLED JONATHAN'S BLUFF; IF JONATHAN WANTED TO PROVE HE HAD HIS PEOPLE'S SUPPORT, LET HIM CALL THE LONG-DELAYED GENERAL ELECTION. EDITORIAL SAID EMPTY VESSELS MAKE MOST NOISE AND NOISE EMANATING FROM JONATHAN GOVERNMENT OVER DETENTE HAS BEEN DEAFENING. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: GOL IS EVIDENTLY CONCERNED THAT DETENTE, IF IT SUCCEEDS, WILL WORK AGAINST LESOTHO'S INTERESTS. ITS FEAR IS THAT LESOTHO'S PLIGHT AS AN ENCLAVE OF SOUTH AFRICA WILL BE LOST SIGHT OF IF CONTACTS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND AFRICAN STATES PROLIFERATE. ITS STRATEGY IS TO TRY TO MAINTAIN FOCUS OF OAU ON EVILS OF APARTHEID AND NECESSITY OF PRESENTING UNITED FRONT AGAINST IT WHILE AT SAME TIME TRYING NOT TO APPEAR AS DOG IN THE MANGER WITH REGARD TO DEVELOPMENTS ON RHODESIA. GOL ALSO VERY MUCH AWARE OF ITS ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA AND NEED TO MAINTAIN TOLERABLE RELATIONS WITH THAT COUNTRY. THESE INTERESTS VERY DIFFICULT FOR GOL TO RECONCILE AND ACCOUNT IN PART FOR ITS SELF-CONTRADICTORY REMARKS ON DETENTE AND RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

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